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Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 119: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/53/266, A/53/327, A/53/342, A/53/375 and Corr.1 and Corr.2 (French only), A/53/385, A/53/414, A/53/501, A/53/502, A/53/526 and Add.1, A/53/548, A/53/642, A/53/814 and A/C.5/52/2; A/C.5/53/L.3)

1. **Ms. Cardoze** (Panama), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the Group associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. She regretted that the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/53/414) had not yet been made available to delegations. In view of the importance of human resources management reform for the success of the Organization in the new millennium, the Rio Group would closely examine reports submitted pursuant to section VII of General Assembly resolution 51/226. She noted the progress made to achieve the level of 70 per cent of permanent appointments in posts subject to geographical distribution and, called for increased representation from Latin America and the Caribbean in posts in the Professional and higher categories. She was especially concerned about the lack of equitable geographical distribution at the higher levels in peacekeeping operations and field commands.

2. She expressed concern at the slow progress made in increasing the representation of women in the organization, called on the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management to meet the objectives of gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender issues in the work of United Nations system, and reaffirmed the commitment of the Rio Group to those objectives.

3. With reference to the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/53/414), she first stressed the importance of accountability to guarantee the efficiency and transparency of operations; it was essential that the rules on accountability should be clear and that there should be specific criteria, particularly with regard to the delegation of authority. Second, she emphasized that the recruitment and placement processes must be based on merit, geographical distribution and gender balance. The system must be reformed to speed up that process, and she noted with interest the measures described in paragraphs 23 and 24 and section C of the report, pointing out the need to give greater responsibility to programme managers once the accountability and operational processes were clearly established. Third, staff development assumed even greater importance at a time when the Organization was redistributing its human resources and she called for the allocation of additional resources for that purpose. Fourth, she believed that the introduction of a system of managed reassignments, a more flexible post structure and a reward system (A/53/414, paras. 45–47) were positive steps. A more flexible post structure should not, however, be interpreted as a mechanism which would create greater distortions between active responsibilities and job descriptions. There should therefore be some harmonization of the roles of administrative staff at all levels Professional staff, General Service staff and locally recruited staff doing Professional level work.

4. The issue of career prospects must be studied in greater depth and its scope must be broadened. Steps must also be taken to guarantee an objective, impartial, balanced and transparent merit-based system which would provide opportunities for career development. Noting the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on performance management (A/53/266), she said that the advantages and disadvantages of any performance-based incentive system must be closely examined. She noted with interest paragraph 28 (f) of the report, but cautioned that a performance-based system could not in any way replace fair remuneration nor affect opportunities for advancement and promotion.

5. The Rio Group was concerned about the threats to the safety of United Nations personnel described in the report of the Secretary-General on the respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations (A/53/501) and stressed that it was the Organization's responsibility to guarantee the necessary level of safety for carrying out the work of the United Nations, not only at Headquarters, but also in the field or during missions.

6. **Mr. Nee** (United States of America) said that his delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/53/414) in which he described the progress made and the tasks that lay ahead. The best guarantee that the Organization would succeed in empowering staff, in an enlightened regime of performance assessment and accountability, would be for it to adhere to the fundamental principles of transparency, due process, fairness and respect for diversity, while at the same meeting the requirements of geographical and gender balance. In that connection, he was gratified at the steady progress being made in the development of the performance appraisal system and commended the Secretary-General for his step-by-step approach to instituting performance awards or bonuses. It was critical that the new system should be functioning well and be perceived as fair; otherwise an award system could have a negative effect on staff morale and motivation.

7. The delegation of authority was the keystone of the new human resources management system since it would allow staff members to take action and exercise initiative within the scope of their designated responsibilities. It was part of the streamlining which would make the Organization's operations more efficient, but he cautioned that there should be no loss of internal control and that, whatever the level of decision-making, appropriate checks and balances must be in place.

8. His Government was committed to honouring its treaty obligations as host country to the United Nations and would not in any way restrict official travel by United Nations employees in the furtherance of their official business. However, it reserved the right to restrict purely recreational, private travel within United States territory by certain United Nations officials or staff members, for reasons of national security, as noted in paragraph 73 of the report of the Secretary-General on the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations (A/53/501). In that connection, his delegation was deeply disturbed by the incidents described in the Secretary-General's report and commended the Secretary-General for his commitment to improving the security of all United Nations personnel.

9. He shared the concerns expressed by other delegations with regard to the inordinate length of time taken to recruit a staff member. He was pleased to learn that changes were under way to eliminate unnecessary steps in the recruitment process and urged the Secretariat to move quickly to complete the overhaul of the recruitment process.

10. Organizational change which took place in a vacuum of information could often lead to uncertainty and even anxiety among the staff, and he commended the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management for their efforts to ensure dialogue with the staff throughout the United Nations system. He thanked the Secretary-General for sharing his vision for human resources management and the steps being taken to make that vision a reality, and assured him of his delegation's wholehearted support. The important tasks which the United Nations would be called upon to carry out in the next millennium would require it to have a framework for staff recruitment, training and career development equal to that of the best-managed organizations, private or public and his delegation looked forward to being a partner in bringing that about.

11. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) expressed his delegation's support for the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He noted with satisfaction the key elements of the Secretary-General's strategy for human resources management reform in an overall context of rationalization and enhanced effectiveness, notably the provision of progressive, competitive conditions of service; clearly defined organizational values and competencies; the development of appropriate policies and guidelines; the refocusing of the role of the Office of Human Resources Management; continuous learning as a priority issue; the fostering of an atmosphere of trust between staff and managers; and an integrated system of human resources planning (A/53/414, para. 9).

12. With respect to the empowerment of managers, his delegation attached importance to the definition of suitable mechanisms for rewarding success and sanctioning failure. Furthermore, mechanisms for making any necessary corrections or adjustments in the area of human resources management speedily and effectively were essential. In that connection, his delegation attached great importance to the improvement of the internal system of justice, which it regarded as a major factor relating to accountability. Stronger links between the internal system of justice and human resources management would be a useful aid to identifying problems and deciding on appropriate action.

13. Concerning the engagement of consultants, it was distressing that there had been some instances when the relevant rules and guidelines had not been fully adhered to. It was important to ensure that the rules and guidelines were applied, having due regard for the principle of geographical distribution.

14. His delegation attached great importance to the issue of the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations and the safety of peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel, recognizing the importance of their functions. All such persons, including those locally recruited, contributed to the achievement of international peace and security and the alleviation of human suffering. Despite their admirable work, however, increasing numbers of them were suffering imprisonment, abduction, material loss, injury and even death in the course of their duties. His delegation applauded the Secretary-General's commitment to improving the security of all United Nations personnel, and concurred in the view that the situation represented a serious challenge requiring the unstinted help of the international community to ensure that all possible measures were taken for the protection of staff.

15. It concurred in the view expressed at the 24th meeting by the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, in introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/501), that there should be a single coordinated resolution covering

both the safety and security and the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations, and humanitarian personnel. The preparation of several draft resolutions covering different aspects of what was essentially a single issue would place an unjustifiable burden on the Secretariat. In his delegation's view, all matters pertaining to staff members and their dependants were within the jurisdiction of the Fifth Committee, including matters relating to their safety, security, privileges and immunities. All such matters had to do with human resources management, which was one of the main items on the Fifth Committee's agenda. It was essential for all staff members to observe the Secretary-General's guidelines, especially with respect to the performance of their duties. At the same time, all necessary steps must be taken to ensure their safety in the performance of those duties.

16. His delegation had learned in the course of the informal discussions that there had been instances of posts that had been left vacant until volunteers were found to fill them, and that, failing a volunteer, the post was left vacant. Such a situation was an obvious source of problems and should be corrected.

17. **Mr. Yamagiwa** (Japan) said that the safety and security of civilian staff members must continue to be a priority for the entire United Nations system. He expressed concern at recent incidents, including the murder of a Japanese civil affairs officer and others in Tajikistan, and appealed to Member States which had not yet done so to accede to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. He pointed out that, since 1994, his Government had been a participant in the regional security enhancement workshop programme of the United Nations Volunteers, which aimed, in particular, at raising awareness of safety and security issues. In that connection, he welcomed the establishment of the Trust Fund for Security of United Nations system staff in the field and announced that his delegation would make a contribution of $1 million to support security measures. Efforts to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel would also help to enhance the security of persons in need of assistance.

18. With regard to the employment of retirees, his delegation concurred in general with the recommendations contained in paragraph 34 of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/53/642). It was of the view that the maximum period of six months per calendar year should be applicable to all retirees irrespective of whether they were receiving pension benefits, although some exceptions could be made if adequate justification was provided. He noted that in some cases retirees had been paid amounts in excess of the limits and felt that such irregularities should be addressed.

19. He noted with appreciation the Secretary-General's report on performance management (A/53/266). He believed that the principles to be followed in developing the system of performance awards described in paragraph 28 of that report was appropriate and concurred with the finding in paragraph 33 that immediate recognition of performance was a powerful incentive. Other forms of award, including the use of step increases, deserved full consideration at a later date. He cautioned, however, that, if the performance appraisal system was not carried out in a proper and appropriate manner, it could damage the trust that existed between staff and management, as well as among staff. His delegation therefore requested the Secretary-General to spare no effort to ensure proper implementation of the performance appraisal system.

20. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on human resources management (A/53/342), his delegation felt that there was insufficient information to support the conclusions of the Secretary-General on the question of geographical imbalance resulting from promotions of successful candidates in the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories in the light of the limited information provided in paragraphs 48 and 49 of the report and requested the Secretariat to provide a breakdown by year and nationality of the 136 staff members so promoted.

21. As for career development, his delegation concurred with the policy statement in paragraphs 51 to 54, but pointed out that the idea of linking grades, mentioned in paragraph 46 of the report on human resources management reform (A/53/414), would require careful examination and that the effectiveness of training programmes for staff must be carefully evaluated.

22. Finally, his delegation noted the information provided on the feasibility of holding national competitive examinations in six official languages, as well as on efforts to achieve the level of 70 per cent of permanent appointments in posts subject to geographical distribution (A/53/342, sections XI and XIII). With respect to the latter, his delegation continued to oppose proposals to reduce the rate of permanent appointments to that category of posts.

23. **Ms. Aragon** (Philippines) said that the continuing financial crisis was undermining the Organization's capacity to implement mandated activities, and appealed to all Member States to pay outstanding dues promptly, in full and without conditions. Human resources, the most valuable United Nations asset, accounted for more than 70 per cent of the budget. The success of the Organization depended on the

quality of staff at all levels, and on a management environment that promoted greater teamwork. In that regard, the Secretary-General's human resource strategy to promote career growth and greater mobility and training was encouraging.

24. She supported the various points made by the Secretary-General in his statement to the Committee regarding the reform of human resources management. Central to that reform was the delegation of authority to programme managers, after proper monitoring mechanisms and procedures to ensure their accountability had been put in place and the necessary training had been provided.

25. The development of a comprehensive career development system emphasizing training and mobility was particularly important. Her delegation would like to know if the freeze on permanent appointments in order to achieve the 70 per cent level of permanent appointments in posts subject to geographical distribution had had any adverse effect on actual career development.

26. A planning system that would identify the availability or lack of Secretariat skills needed to carry out the mandates set by Member States was essential. In that connection, she asked whether the very costly Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) had in fact helped to enhance planning capacity.

27. The performance appraisal system (PAS) should be further revised to promote dialogue between staff and supervisors regarding the goals to be achieved and the basis on which individual performance would be assessed; the performance of supervisors should also be appraised by their subordinates, particularly in view of the Secretary-General's stated intention of delegating authority to programme managers. Performance awards or bonuses should be phased in as a way of improving the morale and productivity of the staff, and any underperformance by a staff member should be addressed at an early stage on in order to maintain staff morale.

28. It was extremely important to improve the status of women in the Secretariat and to achieve gender balance, which unfortunately seemed to be unattainable by the target date of 2000. Greater efforts should be made to recruit qualified women from the developing countries, particularly at the senior level.

29. The security and safety of United Nations personnel was also a matter of concern. All States should sign the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

30. **Ms. Al-Nadiari** (Yemen) expressed support for the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at human resources management reform in the context of the overall reform and renewal of the Organization. The reform should be characterized by diversity, transparency and fairness, and should uphold the requirements for equitable geographical distribution and gender balance. The principle of accountability would ensure that the available resources were used to best advantage.

31. The annex to the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/52/814) revealed that there had sometimes been shortcomings in connection with the engagement of consultants: for instance no proper rosters of candidates had been maintained and candidates' qualifications had not always been adequately examined. Such shortcomings should be corrected, having due regard for the principle of geographical distribution.

32. Her delegation attached considerable importance to the empowerment of managers and those responsible for programme implementation. Effective mechanisms for monitoring and following up the work of managers were an essential component of human resources management reform.

33. The reform process should feature broad consultation between the Organization and the Member States, so that any weakness could be identified and appropriate corrective action taken.

34. **Miss Marston** (Jamaica) said that her delegation continued to attach great importance to human resources management reform, particularly in view of the demands that would continue to be placed on the Organization. It welcomed the improvements made thus far to that end and took note of the work carried out by the Office of Human Resources Management in order to advance the reform process. Attention must now be focused on the implementation of programmes and the importance of balancing reform measures with the needs of the Organization's greatest asset, its staff, who must participate fully in the decision-making process.

35. The development of an organizational culture which stressed the principles of equity, innovation, high performance and managerial excellence would have a positive impact on the work of the United Nations. The performance appraisal system would ensure greater staff accountability; however, it must be periodically reviewed and adapted to the changing environment. The delegation of authority to programme managers would ensure their accountability for achieving results. Her delegation looked forward to receiving more details on the measures to be taken in order to increase

their accountability for human and financial resources. In that connection, it had some reservations concerning the new role of the Office of Human Resources Management and requested clarification.

36. She noted the strategic plan of action being implemented in order to meet the goal of 50/50 gender distribution by the year 2000 in all categories of posts within the United Nations system (A/53/376, para. 1) and the views of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) on the slow pace of progress in improving the representation of women in the Organization (A/53/30, paras. 280 and 281). Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's initiatives in that regard and was encouraged by developments at the D-1 level. It looked forward to the increased representation of women, particularly women from developing countries, at the senior and policy-making levels, and to more rapid progress towards the goal of gender balance.

37. It wished to be apprised of developments with regard to the proposed introduction of a probationary period for successful candidates in the internal competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category and the feasibility of holding the national competitive examinations in the six official languages. Such measures should have a positive impact on the representation of States that were currently under-represented or unrepresented. She expressed her delegation's support for the streamlining of the recruitment and placement process; that process must be transparent and take into account the need for equitable geographical and gender representation. In view of the large number of resignations and retirements, reform of the process was urgent.

38. While responsibility for career development should indeed be shared by the individual, management and the Organization, the proper environment must be created for staff advancement. In that connection, she expressed concern about the maintenance of fixed short-term contracts and stressed the need for the conversion of short-term contracts to permanent contracts and for greater movement from the G to the P level.

39. System-wide training should be implemented in order to ensure that staff members benefited from increased mobility across levels, functions, duty stations and field locations. She stressed the importance of consultation with the staff in order to determine individual development needs and of guaranteeing staff members accessibility to training. Accordingly, the scheduling of training courses should be reviewed and priority should be given to on-the-job training.

40. The administration of justice with regard to staff matters must be given serious attention. Her delegation believed that staff members had a right to fair and transparent hearings and to adequate representation. The improvement of staff-management relations must also be addressed in order to promote increased dialogue and less adjudication.

41. Lastly, her delegation welcomed the comprehensive policy guidelines on the terms of reference, selection, hiring and renewal of consultants (A/53/385). Those guidelines should ensure that core functions of the Secretariat were carried out by international civil servants.

42. **Mr. Kouliev** (Azerbaijan) stressed the importance of personnel questions and the need for a highly qualified United Nations staff, an effective management system and broad representation within the Secretariat. With regard to the latter, he drew attention to General Assembly resolution 51/226, which once again stressed the need for equitable geographical representation, in the Secretariat, particularly at the senior and policy-making levels. That was an issue of profound concern to his country, which, since its admission to the United Nations, remained unrepresented in the Secretariat. The problem had been highlighted by the President of Azerbaijan during a meeting with the United Nations leadership in July 1997 and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan in the general debate during the current session of the General Assembly. Despite serious financial difficulties resulting from the presence of 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons, the occupation of 20 per cent of its territory and its transition to a market economy, Azerbaijan had paid its assessed contribution (the amount of which was unjustifiably high) in a timely manner.

43. According to the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/53/375, annex I, table 4), the mid-point range for Azerbaijan was 6.65 and the desirable maximum 14. While the representation of other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States had been increasing, national competitive examinations had been held in Azerbaijan only once in recent years. Moreover, owing to the lengthy recruitment process (estimated at 461 days), successful candidates from that examination had been forced to seek employment in the private sector. He urged the Secretariat to resolve the problem rapidly and to give due consideration to all Azerbaijani candidates.

44. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed his delegation's support for the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and for the statement delivered at the 24th meeting by the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs concerning the need to adopt a coordinated resolution on the safety and security and the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff. In that connection, he also supported the remarks of the

representative of Egypt. Noting that at the previous session the Third Committee had recommended to the General Assembly a resolution on the protection of United Nations personnel (resolution 52/126), he requested the Chairman to inform the Chairman of the Third Committee that that question was within the purview of the Fifth Committee. The General Assembly had also adopted resolution 52/167 on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, without reference to a Main Committee and was currently holding consultations on a draft resolution on the question. He requested the Chairman to indicate to the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Chairman of the Third Committee, if necessary, that questions relating to the security and safety and the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee under the item on human resources management.

Agenda item 113: Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 (*continued*)

Utilization of the development dividend
(A/53/7/Add.4, A/53/374 and A/53/664; A/C.5/53/30)

45. **Ms. King** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the development dividend (A/53/374). The eight proposals contained in the report had emerged from joint discussions in the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs, which had been guided by the principles outlined in paragraph 21 of the report of the Secretary-General on the Development Account (A/52/1009). Following approval of the proposals and the launch of projects the Executive Committee would use a mechanism of joint monitoring.

46. The proposals were based on the concept of networking for development, which meant the full participation of Member States in the emerging global information network to extract benefits from globalization and avoid marginalization. The concept had been prompted by an awareness that many developing countries would not benefit from the global economy unless they were helped to connect to the major international information sources and that providing information technology was a low-cost solution to the integration of developing countries in the world economy. In the United Nations context, it would facilitate country-level follow-up to United Nations global conferences and would also enhance South-South cooperation. The concept also presumed better networking of experts, as distinct from the traditional dispatching of experts to work on specific technical cooperation projects: the changing nature of technical cooperation required problem-solving, sharing of lessons learned and more substantive contacts among experts.

47. In the proposals, project objectives had been clarified and brought into line with the three basic programme objectives for the utilization of the Development Account mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report on the Development Account (A/52/1009, para. 23). The proposals also referred to the relevant elements and subprogrammes of the medium-term plan; the expected results had been introduced to give an indication of the accomplishments to be achieved within the time-frame of project implementation. It was important to move ahead quickly on the proposals so that they could be implemented during the current biennium.

48. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the utilization of the development dividend (A/C.5/53/7/Add.4), said that the report of the Secretary-General represented a first attempt to programme resources for the Development Account. In future, such information should be provided in the context of the programme budget proposals. The comments of the Advisory Committee on the efficiency measures described in annex I to document A/52/1009 could be found in its first report on the budget proposals for the biennium 1998–1999. According to the Secretary-General, projects to be funded from the Development Account should be complementary and should not replace existing activities. Future reports of the Secretary-General should contain specific and clear information that would enable Member States to determine the extent to which the activities to be funded under section 34 of the programme budget were regional and/or interregional and would complement and not substitute for existing activities. For the reasons set forth in paragraph 7 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the term "complement" should not apply to extrabudgetary funded programmes. In paragraph 8, the Advisory Committee pointed out the difference between proposals funded under section 21 and section 34 of the programme budget. Lastly, the Advisory Committee was of the view that performance indicators needed considerable refinement and that future estimates should contain fully costed project proposals; the current estimates did not include staff cost or maintenance costs.

49. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, referred the Committee to the statement he had made at the 39th meeting of the Second Committee, copies of which were available.

50. **Mr. Mihut** (Romania) expressed his delegation's support for the statement delivered by the representative of

Austria on behalf of the European Union in the Second Committee. From the outset, his delegation had supported the Secretary-General's Track II reform proposals, including the establishment of a Development Account.

51. Referring to the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the development dividend (A/53/374), he acknowledged the scarcity of available resources and the importance of all the projects which were aimed at strengthening capacity-building in the beneficiary countries. The Development Account was, however, intended to finance economic and social activities consistent with the programmes and subprogrammes of the medium-term plan. In that context, his delegation hoped that, during the next biennium, projects under programme 16, Economic development in Europe, would also be included.

52. **Mr. Theophylactou** (Cyprus) said that his delegation aligned itself with the position of the European Union. It shared the view of the Advisory Committee (A/53/7/Add.4, para. 6) that the projects proposed for the utilization of the development dividend should be regional and/or interregional in nature. The new projects must be funded as mandated activities and, once implemented, evaluated on the basis of relevant indicators. Special attention should be given to the least developed countries, particularly in Africa. Moreover, in a diverse and rapidly changing global economy and society, development projects at any level could be effective only if, in addition to the conventional approaches, they incorporated technological innovations, especially in the realm of information.

53. His delegation fully supported the proposed activities outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/374, para. 30), especially those relating to the use of electronic connectivity, the establishment of common databases in the networks, and increased access to basic research inputs. The networking for development concept could be better implemented in a regional context as a first step, and then applied more broadly. Cyprus was ready to offer its services in areas such as technical advice on telecommunications projects, fellowship programmes, and seminars and workshops.

54. **Mr. Yamagiwa** (Japan) said that, with the first half of the biennium 1998 1999 almost over, it was high time to agree on how to utilize the development dividend and begin to use the $13 million already allocated to the Development Account in the budget. There had been a regrettable delay in the submission of proposals for the utilization of the dividend.

55. His delegation believed that the dividend should be used not for projects that were oriented towards various United Nations secretariats and agencies, as suggested in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/374), but for well-publicized projects that would directly benefit developing countries; in that connection, the views of developing countries should be taken into account. His delegation had already proposed an integrated project to create a global computer network for development, which would connect all agencies and Secretariat units involved in development and all Member States, including the developing countries, so that they could share the necessary information. There were some common elements between that proposal and the eight proposed activities listed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/374, para. 30).

56. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Russian Federation) said his delegation felt that the preparation of a resource basis and the expenditure of funds in connection with the development dividend should be in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. His delegation remained opposed to the imposition of new obligations on Member States within the framework of the regular budget. The Development Account must be used as a complementary instrument to help development, particularly that of developing countries. In that context, it believed that the projects proposed in the Secretary-General's report (A/53/374) were capable of helping developing countries, *inter alia*, through partnerships with other countries, including countries with economies in transition. It saw no need for a further report by the Secretary-General on the Development Account, but could agree that further work on the question by the General Assembly should be postponed.

57. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) said that the Group of 77 and China had expressed its views on the question of the utilization of the development dividend in the Second Committee, but reserved the right to make a further statement on the subject in the Fifth Committee at a later date. It was his delegation's understanding that the Chairman of the Second Committee would submit the views of that Committee on the subject to the Fifth Committee. The Group of 77 reiterated its strong support for the work of the Coordinator on the topic and requested that the Fifth Committee schedule an additional meeting to discuss the related report of the Secretary-General (A/52/1009).

58. **Mr. Vantsevich** (Belarus) said that his delegation agreed with the concern expressed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs in her statement. The issue was a complex one and could only be resolved when a consensus had been reached on the fundamentals. It was his delegation's view that the concept of the Development Account and the source of its financing must not be altered. The utilization of the development dividend must also remain as proposed in the Secretary-General's report. It was a

complementary resource for developing countries and, as stated in the Secretary-General's report, for the rest of the international community, including countries with economies in transition.

59. **Mr. Ivaschenko** (Ukraine) said that his delegation continued to believe strongly that the concept of development should not be limited only to the needs of the developing countries and that the development dividend should be utilized, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, for worldwide development, including the development of countries with economies in transition. It fully supported the statement made on the subject by the representative of the Russian Federation and considered that the priority areas for the utilization of the Development Account should be discussed and defined substantively in the Second Committee.

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998 (A/C.5/53/2)

60. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the financial implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 1998, costed in document A/C.5/53/2, would result in a reduction of the requirements against the 1998–1999 budget in the amount of $152,900. There were thus no additional requirements as a result of the resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council.

61. **Ms. Buergo Rodriguez** (Cuba) said that she would like to have a breakdown of the sum of $110,500 referred to in paragraph 3 of the report (A/C.5/53/2), specifying the expenditures corresponding to each of the Special Rapporteurs. She also enquired what decisions had been taken by the General Assembly as a result of the report requested in resolution 52/220.

62. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the amount of $110,500 mentioned in paragraph 3 of the report related to four separate decisions taken by the Commission on Human Rights on 17 April 1998, decisions 24, 25, 33 and 60. The expenditures for the first three decisions amounted to $61,700 and for the fourth to $46,400. The total requirement of $231,500 was offset by savings of $121,000 resulting from the discontinuance of the activities relating to assistance to Guatemala in the field of human rights. The net requirement thus amounted to $110,500, which would be absorbed against savings expected from higher than expected vacancy rates under section 22 of the programme budget.

63. The report requested in General Assembly resolution 52/220 had been submitted on 9 March 1998 (A/C.5/52/42). To the best of his knowledge, no decision had been taken on it. The report had been requested in connection with the mandates for Special Rapporteurs. All activities being undertaken by Special Rapporteurs under section 22 of the budget had been mandated during the course of 1998. There were no unmandated activities involving Special Rapporteurs currently being undertaken by the Centre for Human Rights.

64. **Ms. Buergo Rodriguez** (Cuba) asked that information on the breakdown of the sum of $110,500, including specific information on each of the four decisions to which the Director of the Budget Division had referred, should be submitted in writing to her delegation. The Committee should finally have a general debate on the subject; it was regrettable that no action had been taken as yet. Her delegation requested that the Committee should take no decision on the question until the information it had requested had been received.

65. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) said that his delegation would also like details on the subject, including the origin of the $110,500 referred to by the Director of the Budget Division.

66. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should postpone a decision on the item until the information had been received from the Secretariat.

67. *It was so decided.*

Administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/C.5/53/4)

68. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the item (A/C.5/53/4) indicated financial implications for the common system amounting to $9.8 million; the portion relating to the United Nations amounted to $2,453,000. The Secretary-General had indicated that that amount would be included in the first performance report for the biennium 1998–1999. The Advisory Committee concurred in that approach.

69. **Ms. Buergo Rodriguez** (Cuba) asked whether the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the Secretary-General's recommendations on supplementary resources required against the regular budget resulting from the recommendations of ICSC would be taken into account in the first performance report for the biennium 1998–1999 and whether that was the established procedure.

70. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that in nearly all instances the costs in question fell under the heading of salary or common staff costs. The Fifth Committee had traditionally taken the approach that such costs were best dealt with in the context of the first performance report.

71. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should consider and take action on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations of ICSC in the context of its consultations on the report of ICSC.

72. *It was so decided.*

Conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials: members of the International Court of Justice (A/53/7/Add.6; A/C.5/53/11)

73. **Mr. Mselle**(Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee (A/53/7/Add.6), said that the latest salary adjustment, on 1 January 1991, had set the emoluments of members of the International Court of Justice at $145,000 per year. Since that date the consumer price index had increased by 19 per cent by the end of 1997, and by 20.2 per cent by August 1998. The Secretary-General recommended that the annual remuneration should be increased to $164,500 per year; the Advisory Committee recommended that it should be increased to $160,000 per year.

74. The Secretary-General recommended that the pension of a judge who had served a full term of nine years should be set at half the judges' annual salary at the time of retirement, a recommendation that would restore the pre-1991 regime. The Advisory Committee agreed with that proposal. However, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 18 and 19 of its report, the Advisory Committee did not recommend a continuation of current provisions affecting pension benefits for judicial service in excess of nine years. If its recommendation was accepted, it should be applied with prospective effect. The Secretary-General had proposed that the recommendation should be implemented in two stages, but the Advisory Committee recommended that it should be implemented in three stages.

75. The Advisory Committee recommended that pensions in payment should be automatically revised by the same percentage and on the same date as salary adjustments. The reasons for that recommendation were set out in paragraph 21 of its report.

76. Conditions of service for members of the other two Tribunals were dealt with in paragraphs 27 to 30 of the Advisory Committee's report. If the General Assembly accepted the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the conditions of service of members of the International Court of Justice, then the related conditions of service of members of the other two Tribunals would also have to be adjusted in the manner indicated.

77. **Mr. Bond** (United States of America) said his delegation had found the residence criteria referred to in the Secretary-General's report confusing and noted that there was a disparity between the salary increases for members of the International Court of Justice recommended by the Secretary-General and those recommended by ACABQ. It hoped that informal consultations could be scheduled to discuss those questions.

Request for a subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research resulting from the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Institute on the work programme of the Institute for 1999 (A/C.5/53/29)

78. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the request for a subvention of $213,000, an amount already allocated under the item in the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999, should be approved.

79. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America), said that while he acknowledged that the amount in question was included in the budget, he wished to reiterate his delegation's opposition to the concept of subventions to non-United Nations institutes or centres. In that connection, he recalled the Secretary-General's conclusion (A/C.5/50/33) that activities under the budget should be carried out by the Secretariat and not by outside bodies.

80. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) supported the approval of the amount requested.

81. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should recommend that the General Assembly approve the recommendation of a subvention of $213,000 from the regular budget of the United Nations for 1999, on the understanding that no additional appropriation would be required under section 2 B (Disarmament) of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.

82. *It was so decided.*

Administrative and financial implications arising from the report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (continued) (A/53/511; A/C.5/53/3)

83. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) recalled that he had introduced the Advisory Committee's report (A/53/511) at the 18th meeting of the Fifth Committee, at which time the Advisory Committee had had available to it the information set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/53/3). The Advisory Committee approved the conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in paragraphs 15 and 16 of his report (A/C.5/53/3): namely, that the programme budget would be reduced by $625,400 as the net effect of an increase of $487,100 under section 1 and a decrease of roughly $1.1 million under section 27.

84. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should consider and take action on the administrative and financial implications arising from the report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board in the context of its consultations on that report.

85. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/53/3, chaps. I, VIII (sects. B and C) and X)

86. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should recommend that the General Assembly should take note of chapters I, VIII (sections B and C) and X of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/53/3) which had been allocated to the Fifth Committee for consideration.

87. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.